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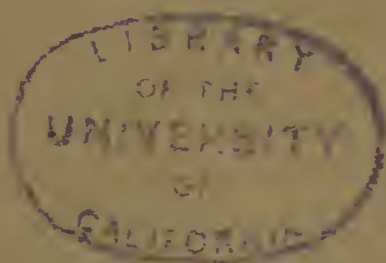
Seattle public library

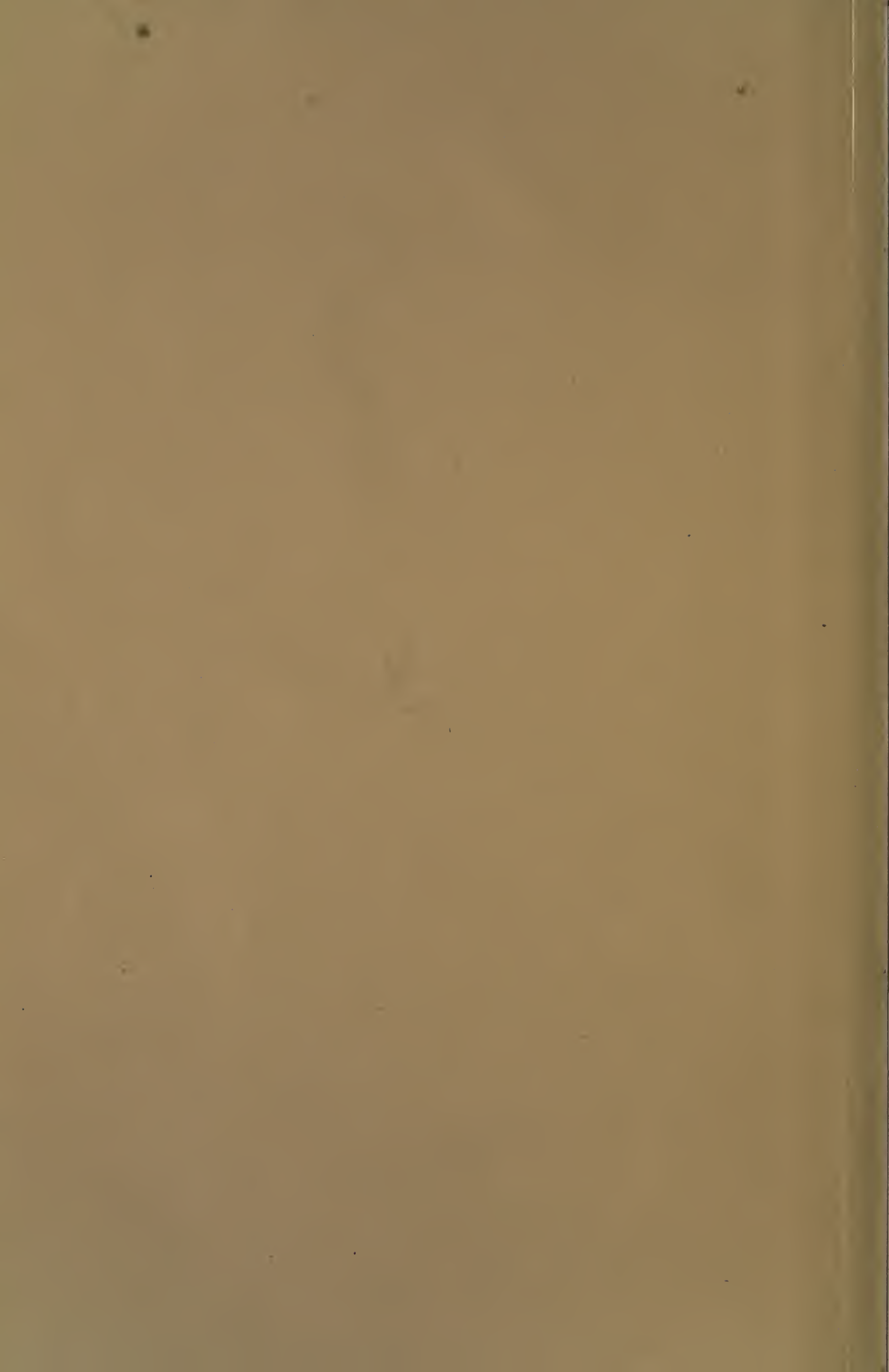
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LIBRARY
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Opening
of the Seattle
Public Library
Building





PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
*Opening of the
Seattle Public Library
Building*

DECEMBER 19
1906



THE GIFT OF
ANDREW CARNEGIE



The Ivy Press
1907

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SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY



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DELIVERY ROOM, SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY



Prefatory Note

On January 1, 1901, the building occupied by the public library of the City of Seattle was consumed by fire, and with it most of the library. Within one week, Mr. Andrew Carnegie, upon representations of leading citizens and officials of the city's need of a library building and of its ability to provide a site and an annual maintenance fund of \$50,000, offered to give to it for such purpose \$200,000. This offer was promptly accepted, and the gift was later increased by \$20,000 for furniture and fixtures. The site—a city block 256 by 240 feet—was bought for \$100,000 in 1902. The architect, Mr. P. J. Weber of Chicago, was selected, after personal investigation of most of the library buildings in the United States by the librarian and one of the trustees, and after an architectural competition conducted under the supervision and advice of Prof. Wm. R. Ware, of Columbia University. The contract for the building was let, under competition, to Cawsey & Carney of Seattle on April 15, 1904; and the building was completed and turned over to the Library Board in November, 1906. On the 19th of December, 1906, the opening exercises were held, consisting of the following addresses.

In the absence of the Hon. J. A. Stratton, Chairman of the Board of Library Trustees, the introductory address was made by Mr. Charles E. Shepard, the Vice-Chairman.



Introductory Address



THE day of housing the Seattle Public Library in a fit and adequate building—so long looked for with deferred hope, but untiring efforts and unabated interest—has come at last. Those efforts have been a part of the life of the community since it was a frontier village—a pin-hole in a vast and dense forest; and we should now briefly record them. Woman, always forward in all good works, took the first steps for a free public library here. In 1888 the “Ladies’ Library Association of Seattle” was formed by Mesdames J. C. Haines, A. B. Stewart, L. S. J. Hunt, W. E. Boone, J. H. Sanderson, Joseph F. McNaught, G. Morris Haller and George H. Heilbron; and its main object was to found and maintain such a library. The city charter did not then authorize any expense to that end; and these ladies first sought private contributions. They soon induced Henry L. Yesler, one of our earliest pioneers, to convey to trustees as a gift for a city library the triangular block bounded by Yesler Way, Third Avenue and Jefferson Street, with provisions for erecting and maintaining thereon a library building out of the revenues to be derived from the building. Various obstacles, legal and personal, have delayed the intended use of this gift; but they have not canceled the trust and the Library Board is confident of soon availing itself of Mr. Yesler’s public-spirited act.

In 1890 the city, under a clause in the State Constitution then lately adopted, set out to frame its own charter; and the “Freeholders’ Charter,” commonly so-called, was the result. The ladies of the Library Association were quick to seize their opportunity; and the late Junius Rochester, impelled by their and his own zeal in the cause of popular intelligence, acted as their spokesman, and ardently advocated a provision in the new charter for a free public library at the expense of the taxpayers. It was due to the united efforts of these ladies and Judge Rochester, amid general ignorance or

indifference concerning what was then a novel idea here, that serious opposition was overcome. Since that day it has never been a question whether the City of Seattle would have a public library; but only how good it should be, and how much money to spend on it.

The Seattle Public Library was thus founded in 1891. In those early days it was a small and struggling affair with a meager income, dependent on the favor of the city government of the day, and without vested rights of income, or a strong public opinion to aid it. But the unselfish devotion of its early friends kept it alive. Among members deserving of praise it may seem invidious to name any, but without detracting from the merits of others it is only just to mention Mrs. J. C. Haines. She was a member of the first board of library trustees under the freeholders' charter, and for years gave more of time and zeal to the affairs of the library than any one else. For a decade after its foundation it was in an invidious sense a traveling library—moving from one building to another according to the exigencies of rents and available quarters. On January 1, 1901, the library was occupying the so-called Yesler mansion, a large dwelling on the block bounded by Third and Fourth Avenues and James and Jefferson Streets, when a nocturnal fire destroyed the building and most of its contents. This happy misfortune at once brought to an acute stage the question, long mooted, of a permanent and worthy home for the library. Mr. Andrew Carnegie was just then considering the propriety of a donation to the city for that purpose, and on being informed of our exigency and our ability to maintain suitably a much larger building than he had contemplated, he offered us \$200,000 and after this building was begun added \$20,000 for its equipment. These, we understand, are much larger sums than he has given for like purposes to any other city of equal population; and are greater in ratio to population than any of his other library gifts, except to Dumferline, the place of his birth, and Pittsburgh, the place of his success. This gift was made on the terms usual in all of Mr. Carnegie's donations, that the city provide the site and an adequate annual maintenance fund in perpetuity.

Shortly after the fire the Library Board rented the old University Building on the original site of the State University and that has been the abode of the library until today. After the consideration of several proposed sites, the entire block on which this building stands was purchased by the city. A study of other library buildings with personal inspection of nearly every prominent one in this country was

made, and an architectural competition was held—all that we might attain, as near as may be, to the ideal of a modern public library building. Mr. P. J. Weber, of Chicago, presented the winning design out of twenty-nine. Its embodiment you see here tonight. It is what Mr. Carnegie urged us to build—a fire-proof building. The entire structure consists of stone, steel, brick, concrete and glass with wood only in the floor surfaces and the interior finishing. And the Board feels that it is only just to say that it is highly satisfied with the work alike of the architect, the contractors and the superintendent, all of whom have contributed loyally their best efforts in their respective spheres. We trust that our fellow citizens will feel that this building adequately meets the library's needs and represents the donor's generosity.

For Mr. Carnegie's munificence to a community in which he has no personal interest, situated in the extreme part of the country, the people of Seattle will ever feel grateful. But apart from any local feeling of gratitude for the gift or pride in the result, they also recognize in Mr. Carnegie's numerous library foundations both a broad-minded philanthropy and an enlightened patriotism. There have been liberal givers before him; many men of wealth in many lands have given of their abundance to build churches, endow colleges and hospitals, and found homes for the aged or unfortunate—all causes in which the givers felt a special interest. But practically all such donations have been for a sect or a class. Mr. Carnegie is the first who has made a whole people his beneficiary—and this is his peculiar glory. The doors of every Carnegie library are open to all who choose to enter without distinction of race, or creed, or station, or condition in life. It is most appropriate, then, that two tablets have been prepared and are to be mounted near the entrance, bearing the donor's name, and this sentiment, not only written by his pen, but also spoken by his many gifts: "The surplus wealth of the few shall become in the best sense the property of the many, because administered for the common good."

The free public library is the university of the people. It is peculiarly an American institution. As America is the country where the ideal of democracy—equality of right and of opportunity in public and private life—has been most nearly obtained; so it is the land where that equality has been earliest and best and most broadly extended into the educational field by means of the public school and the public library. Real democracy—government by the people—can-

not endure, save by an intelligent people. And if, as that political Tory, but intellectual democrat, Samuel Johnson, said, the best education is that which one gives himself, then the free public library in extending to all the opportunity of that education stands beside the organs of formal education as one of the mainstays of popular intelligence and of the perpetuity of the republic. These two are like the two great pillars in Solomon's Temple—the chief ornament and support of the structure.

The praises of books have been sung from the days of antiquity until now. But such praises have come from those to whom books were their daily food—with whom, as Cicero says, they spent the nights and traveled when they went from home. The literary, scholastic and professional classes using books as both tools and friends got a false perspective of their actual use and value among the masses. The great voiceless public for ages had to take the praises on trust so far as practical and familiar use of the vast and rich stores of literature went. The printing press struck the shackles of the copying pen from literature; but the free public library has brought her out from the narrow closet of the recluse and the lamplit study of the scholar, set her in the open light of the sun and made her free as air, that all who will may study and enjoy her noble countenance. There may each without cost or hindrance find what best befits his years and state and needs—for age, solace; for manhood, strength; for youth, inspiration. There may you, however poor you be in purse, or lowly in station, or laden with the ills and toils of life, know the truth of those fine lines of Emily Dickinson:

*“He ate and drank the precious words,
His spirit grew robust;
He knew no more that he was poor,
Nor that his frame was dust.*

*He danced along the dingy days,
And this bequest of wings
Was but a book—such liberty
A loosened spirit brings.”*

So this library of our Queen City stretches out its welcoming hands and bids you all come and see

*“How frugal is the chariot
That bears the human soul.”*

*Mr. Shepard, then addressing the Hon.
Wm. Hickman Moore, the Mayor of
the City, said:*

And now, Mr. Mayor, it only remains for me, in behalf of the Library Board, and in discharge of our official duty, to deliver to you the keys of this Public Library Building, the gift of Mr. Carnegie to the City of Seattle.



His Honor, the Mayor, in response said:



AS has been well said, the perpetuity of our nation and institutions, and the welfare and happiness of our people, depend upon the intelligence of our citizenship. The founders of the nation, and those to whom was intrusted the management of the affairs of the nation, realizing that, early made national provision for and gave encouragement to public education. Not only did the founders of the nation and those to whom was intrusted the management of its affairs realize this fact and make provision for and encourage public education, but the same was taken up by the different states and territories of the Union and the cities of the different states and territories, and as a result of this belief on the part of our forefathers and those who came after them, down to the men of the present day, there has been established our system of education—the free public school and the free public library—which is not equalled by any system in any other country in the world.

The education that, as boys and girls, we receive in our public schools is simply the foundation upon which is builded the education that fits us for carrying out the affairs of life. It is proper and it is desirable that those of us who have passed beyond our school days (and many of us have probably started on the downhill of life, so to speak), should have within our reach the opportunities and the power to continue the further prosecution of what we gained in the public schools. That can best be accomplished through the free public library.

It is not only proper and necessary that we should have these opportunities, but it is proper and necessary that the younger, including the children, should have these opportunities.

It is peculiarly fortunate for us in Seattle that we have this library built at the present time, for we have a growing population, and among our people are many young men and women who have come to our city in recent days, and such

will continue to come in greater numbers to live in our midst, and this building and library will afford a haven or refuge to those people; it will give them a place where they will not be subjected to the temptations of the outer world that they otherwise would be subjected to, until they become acquainted in our community.

The city of Seattle owes an everlasting debt of gratitude to Mr. Carnegie, by whose generosity and philanthropy we were enabled to acquire and now dedicate this building forever to the use of the people as a free public library.

Mr. Shepard then said:

It is proper at this point to read a letter from Mr. Carnegie in response to an invitation—(*applause*)—sent to him some time ago by the Board, to attend the opening of the building. The letter was sent to us from Skibo Castle, Scotland, and reads as follows:

CHARLES W. SMITH, ESQ., *Secretary,*
Public Library of Seattle,
Seattle, Wash.

Mr. Carnegie tenders his thanks to the Library Board for the kind invitation to the opening of the library, and regrets that his engagements make it impossible for him to accept, but he begs to send his best wishes for the success of the library and the happiness of all the people of Seattle.

JAMES BERTRAM,
Private Secretary.

A library implies a librarian, and the city of Seattle and its Library Board have been blessed for now something like ten or eleven years with an excellent librarian who has built up a fine library, and gathered together to conduct it a zealous, devoted and loyal staff.

In 1895, when Mr. Smith was installed in that post, the library staff numbered five besides him and worked half time. In December, 1906, the staff, including all in attendance on the branch libraries, numbers forty-seven. In 1896 the total income of the library was \$7,300; in 1906 its total income is \$88,000. In 1895, or 1896, the total number of books was about 10,000 volumes; today it is 85,000.

Mr. Charles W. Smith, our librarian, will next address you upon a subject with which he is familiar: "What the Community Owes to the Public Library."



What the Community Owes to the Public Library



SEATTLE is proud of her fifty years of history. The little notch in the forest has become a village, the village a town, the town a city of imperial pretensions.

But what constitutes a city? True, an empire of virgin wealth has been conquered. On one and another day of pride, lines of ships have come, breaking a path across the ocean, to offer tribute; railways have come, leading the steel-shod caravans of trade across the desert to the port of the Fortunate Seas; the gates of a land of gold have opened wide, destined to swing forever outward; people from all lands have hastened hither, until it has seemed to our partial eyes that the star of empire had at last halted in its course and stood still above us.

But students of the English language and English history tell us that no town in England was entitled to be called a *city* until it contained a cathedral. During the centuries when the church embodied not only theology but all learning, the seats of the episcopacy with their superb temples dedicated to God, might well be considered the real centers of the nation's power; and, as you know, to the creation of these shrines, successive generations of builders devoted their lives and fortunes.

May we not say in like manner today that no place—certainly in America—has the right to consider itself really a city until it contains a temple like this, a free public library? And, dedicated to the advancement of learning and the uplifting of humanity, can this be counted other than a sacred shrine?

Consider, too, the labors and devotion of its founders. Scores of centuries, all the wise and good of earth have wrought toward its upbuilding; and tonight, from their niches in these halls, their mighty spirits forever incarnate in

their works look down with calm eyes upon us. The sacred candlesticks burning in such a temple as this, flinging out their steady rays athwart the dubious pathway of life, were kindled by the brightest genius of earth; and here, as in the ancient Holy of Holies, the Shekinah fire of truth, the eternal covenant of the mind of God with man, flames forever.

By all the rules of definition, then, including the important one just noted, the dweller in Seattle may now claim to be "a citizen of no mean city." Moreover, it is my belief that no day in our annals is destined to be marked by a more memorable event than this day on which the Public Library hereby comes into its own in a manner to inspire the respect and receive the support henceforth which it deserves.

Everything is improved by a beautiful setting. The only pathway to our affections is through the gates of sense. Therefore, our city is to be most heartily congratulated on the possession of this stately home for an institution which is the designated depository and trustee of civilization. For, within these walls you have the journal of humanity, the manuscript of creation. Destroy what is contained here and the dial of time would be turned back from noon to midnight.

Fulfilling its functions, then, as the depository of the newest knowledge of the day and the hoarded wisdom of the long past, the library holds that knowledge and wisdom in trust for civilization. This trust, we may now know, is a two-fold one,—its first object, completion; its second, dissemination.

The first of these functions is the old and familiar one, as old as civilization itself. Since man learned the art of etching his thoughts in fixed symbols, to be better understood by his fellows, or that he might be remembered by his successors, these treasures of the mind have existed. The most ancient records tell of them, and our latest discoveries repeat their story. Graven on broad tablets of clay, they are being uncovered from beneath the shifting sands of Babylon, already fifty centuries old when the prophet of the Hebrews cried: "Sit thou silent and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called 'The Lady of Kingdoms.' " Painted upon stone and carved in granite, the remains of ancient libraries are exhumed from the tombs of kings that built the pyramids, in the days when the mystic cry of Memnon first awoke the dawn over Egypt.

Through the ages since, collections of writings have preserved this function, leading along the stream of civilization, now a mere trickle, and again increasing to a flood and watering the whole earth. Of all man's works that alone to

which he seems able to impart immortality is the book he has written. As into his nostrils was breathed the breath of life, so man has breathed his own soul into the book.

The true book is a labor of love. It is the best that is in the author, brought forth through the agonizing struggles of his genius in its passion for utterance, with the same creative impulse by which God framed the worlds and animated by the same godlike instinct of love and the same necessity for expression. The endless toil through which the writer strives to perfect his work is simply the measure of his love of the truth and of his desire to share with others its sublime import. And whatsoever he has written that contains the knowledge of the truth, partakes of truth's own eternity.

The second function of the library, the dissemination of knowledge, is no less indispensable. It is part and parcel of the wonderful demand for free education. It is no longer the aim of the library to be only a conservator of materials; it must be a positive force working with enthusiastic activity to enlighten and uplift the race.

The public library of today is in a beautiful and convenient building, equipped with reading rooms, lecture and class rooms, art gallery and assembly rooms for the meetings of learned societies. It is sought to make it a means of public comfort, as well as public education, and so to attract people as yet little accustomed to the ministry of books. There is no longer doubt that it can be made a center of such influences as shall make its attractions linger in the heart, drawing more strongly than almost any other agency of our civilization.

It should be the first resort for one out of employment. It may become, without any loss to his self-respect, the poor man's club. That city would be richly repaid in peace and good order which should succeed in making these places such centers of sweetness and light as should draw always toward them its poor and its unemployed for counsel and encouragement. As Mr. Carnegie, our benefactor, has said, there is no possible danger of injuring people by "placing within their reach the means of knowledge, because these only yield their fruits to such as cultivate them by their own exertions."

How much this equalizing of opportunity means to the state may be seen from the statistical fact that nine-tenths of the children, even in this favored land, leave school without finishing the common grades; only one in four that enter the high school completes the course; and barely one per cent is graduated from all our colleges and universities.



Democracy as a theory of government has at last come to stay, we hope, in the earth; and America is the land where its problems must be worked out. Only God knows what problems there are before us. But this we do know, that the thoughts of the people today will be their deeds tomorrow.

We know also that without the power to make comparison and to understand cause and effect, without a knowledge of history, masses of men will be as clay in the hands of political bosses and plutocrats. On the other hand, without the broadening of outlook and the humanizing of feeling that come from acquaintance with the best literature, the poor and unhappy must become dangerous whenever they become conscious of brute strength and determined to rely upon it.

The ship of state must, consequently, be defended against perils both from above and from below, so to speak, from storm and from shock, from tyranny and corruption on the one hand and from ignorance and prejudice on the other. But, behold, in our library a chart of the shores of all past time, showing where storms are brewed and where gentle trade winds blow; pointing out the deep broad channels of success, the shallows of human weakness and the reefs of human despair. It is here, then, that democracy must seek its final defense against repeating over and again the mistakes whose slow correction is the story of social progress.

But if the argument for the support of the free library be put upon the broad plane of the safety of the state, there is a still broader plane upon which to place it,—that of the welfare and happiness of the individual, of whom, by whom and for whom, the state exists.

The time has come when the fullest opportunity of the individual to *know* is conceded, not because society needs protection from his ignorance, but because it is his right. This "higher law" in human evolution bids each individual begin where all his predecessors left off and urges him forward by the counsels of perfection. Moreover, the full realization of our ideals demands that every soul shall have as a heritage the moral and spiritual riches of past human achievement.

As another has put it, the end of education is, first, to enable a man to earn a living, and then, to make life worth living. Measured by this two-fold object, our institution takes highest rank. The common school is the foundation of education, but it is only a foundation. Upon it the high school, college, university and technical school, the periodical press, the pulpit, platform and stage, all go to build the

superstructure. Crowning all, binding all together as one, composed of the substance and partaking the strength of all, stands the keystone, the free public library.

On the practical side, it is the school, free alike to rich and poor, which keeps while life lasts, and whose courses extend from kindergarten to university. On the side of the higher ideals we find it containing an inexhaustible wealth of humankindness, of inspiration and hope. Given the desire for truth and beauty and the means of gratifying it with art and poetry and science and a man might

*"Walk in glory and in joy,
Following the plow along the mountain side."*

Above all else the work of the library begins by reaching out and touching the lives of the young.

If you teach the child to read but do not teach him *what* to read nor help him to form a good taste in the selection of his reading, you have furnished him with edged tools which may in his hands become weapons turned against his neighbor or against his own life. The dime novel libraries and the gaily painted vulgarity of the Sunday newspaper were never so much in evidence as they are today and perhaps never quite so noxious in their effect upon the heart and imagination of the future citizen, husband and father. The weak and silly story paper, the vapid and impossible romance pour in a flood from the roaring presses; and it is from these that our girls are to get their views of life.

By co-operative work with the public schools, making each school room a branch library, it is possible to reach every child that is born, even of the poorest parents, and to put into his hands the books that, with the revelation of new truth, will give a significance to life hitherto undreamed of, or with the glowing touch of imagination will transfigure his poor surroundings, and, as it were, create the world for him anew. This work cannot begin too early. Luther Burbank says: "If we hope for any improvement of the human race we must begin with the child, as the child responds more readily to environment than any other creature in existence."

It is the mission of the public library to bring to these young lives the ripened fruit of the love and tenderness which humanity has in all ages borne towards childhood; to fill these ingenuous hearts with such visions of truth and beauty that there shall be no room left for whatsoever defileth or maketh a lie. Our children have tasted of the tree of knowledge; it lies in our power to enable them to grasp the fruit

of life; and one generation of fully redeemed childhood would show us a redeemed world.

The library deserves our sympathy then and our support because it may be of such benefit to those who need it most—the teacher of the untaught, the refuge of the friendless, a dispenser of the “medicine of the soul” to those who have found no physician for their complaints.

To such the library must come with its supreme mission of equalizing opportunity. It must try to seek them out and bring them to itself, or go where they are if need be. It may not, although sometimes even our churches do so, withdraw itself to more fashionable and exclusive locations. On the contrary, it must establish branches wherever needed, so that the poor can use its treasures without paying an impossible tax in time and car rare. It must win the people to an appreciation of its riches and their great privilege.

I have thus briefly supported the claims of this institution upon the citizens and taxpayers of the city. I have attempted to show that it is a public necessity, its mission the greatest of all altruisms, and therefore its existence interwoven with your destiny. We know that knowledge is power, faith and love omnipotent and beauty a joy forever; and we have here stored up all these dynamics of the universe.

Think of the appeal to your heart and my heart of these wonderful things we call books! Without them, we should be poor, starved, shipwrecked souls in the limitless waste of the years. But we have not been left so desolate. Tennyson sings:

*“Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not born to die;
And Thou hast made him, Thou art just.”*

And what a miracle is here, that a wandering Phoenician should invent certain cabalistic signs, that a German tinker should one day carve them on blocks of wood, and now you and I may stand here and listen to the immortal voices of Isaiah and Homer and Dante and Shakespeare! Are we not verily become as gods?

Familiarity with the printed page and the leathern coat must not blind our eyes to our supreme privilege. This magic palace of the mind in which we are gathered is become a whispering gallery of the ages. This air, saturated with the distilled wisdom of time, is throbbing with the tongues of all nations. Who that has a listening ear can fail to be amazed at the delights here in store?

And so, I urge that each generation, coming open-eyed and empty-handed upon life's stage, has a right, an inherent, inalienable right, to these moral and spiritual riches. Every human soul is brought into the world by no will of his own, heir of necessity to the ignorance and weakness of his predecessors. Coming hither, he knows not whence, nor why; proceeding, he knows not whither; but with his isolation, his atomic loneliness amid the impassable gulfs of human identity forever haunting him, his eyes peering anxiously through the mist of individual experience, and his imagination beating its wings against the prison bars of human intelligence—every soul, I say, is entitled to have as his heritage and possession the record of all the experience of his predecessors, all the achievements of their strength, all the hopes and aspirations that animated them, made as freely his as the air and the sunshine. And here, in this eternal banquet hall of the spirit, the feast of wisdom is always spread; its life-giving bread is here always broken, its cups of immortality are forever brimming.

Mr. Shepard then said:

We were fortunate to secure as the principal speaker on this occasion Dr. Benjamin Ide Wheeler, who will address you on the subject of "The Things Worth While for a People."



The Things Worth While for a People



WE ARE met to dedicate to the highest uses of society a public building made possible through the wise bestowal of private wealth. In these days when the development of transportation through the fettering of steam and electricity by steel has rapidly created enormous stores of wealth by intense re-grouping of the world's commodities, everyone who looks with true eyes is forced to observe how helpless are the temporary recipients of this wealth to use what they are so skilled to collect. It appears that men now accumulate money without the slightest plan for its use except as a means of accumulating more. "Making money" as an end in itself is surely enough a modern and even a recently modern phenomenon. The original idea in human society of the assembling of wealth and of the protection by society of its possession by individuals was directly connected with the establishment and security of the home and the family. The very notion of private wealth is something developed amongst human kind along with the growing conception of responsibility for the well-being of offspring; and the continuance of it in the possession of the family through inheritance, was associated with certain duties of respect on the part of offspring toward the graves and memories of ancestors. The successive generations passed on through their successive possession of the family estate as battalions march through a gateway, and it was the estate which assured their continuance in a life-chain. Personal ownership and inheritances were devices naively created by primitive society for a special purpose. Now this connection with a purpose has almost passed away, as the amount which can be amassed has passed out of any reasonable relation with the possibilities of personal use. The amassing proceeds without any formulated reference to any known or conceivable use. Men are supposed to know that they will die; they are supposed

to know that Charon's boat takes no freight. They might, with the common lessons of experience open about them, be also supposed to know that inherited wealth beyond the needs of plain security is a harm rather than a help to children. But still they go on leaving their crude hoards of purposeless riches on the river bank to serve for the temptation of lawyers and the ruination of their children, without having planned either of the two things. It is this absence of rational connection between accumulation and use which constitutes the salient mark of this modern folly of dying hopelessly and aimlessly rich.

The folly's only excuse might perhaps be that in the sudden transition to the greater riches education in the proper use has not kept pace with the mechanism of gain. In the hurry of opportunity men have lost perspective in the things worth while.

The greatness of Andrew Carnegie is found neither in his wealth, nor in his power of acquisition, which I decline to believe represents necessarily in itself any particularly marked talent radically distinguishing him from other men, but it is really great to have risen so high above the habit of his day as he has done,—to have kept clear measure of relative values in the midst of abnormal circumstances, to have prevented his enormous moneys from lapsing into the crude bullion of meaningless wealth and really losing all value in separation from use. As surely as he that loseth his life shall find it, so surely has that man lost his wealth who cannot use it.

The fortunes of the day have in their volume passed entirely beyond any remotely possible relation to personal or family needs. One's capacity for digesting and assimilating food is not significantly increased by added millions; neither are the possibilities of apparel in any wise sufficient to keep pace, not even if the women of the household eschew the products of the loom and hide the lack with precious pearls. Accumulations of motor cars and yachts and residences alternating with the months cannot penetrate the shell of swelling incomes, but they can burden and smother the life with material mass and consume its strength with the fuss of machinery. Perspective in the things worth while has therefore for these people very little reference to the things of private and personal use; it concerns their attitude toward public duty. Do they recognize an obligation toward society at large? Will they accept within the purview of their duty consideration of the things that are worth while for a people? If they are not to do this, it is

inevitable that their blind inaction can only contribute momentum to the demand for enlargement of the functions of the state by simply lending excuse for the state to occupy a waste and uncultivated area of opportunity. The public sentiment of a progressive people abhors a vacuum as much as nature does.

Among the things that are worth while for a people, we Americans are likely with reason to put in first rank that freedom of individual initiative by the exercise of which we have gained our chief distinction as a people. The blood of the seafarers from the various coasts of the fickle North Sea is in our veins and we are willing to accept the loss and gain of risks so long as we are left the freedom to choose our time and course for ourselves. The gains of success are high, but the wrecks are pitiful; still we love the intelligent and self-determined risk. Others have offered us systems of greater prudence and economy, but we have preferred to found our life and government upon freedom, with all its apparent waste, and through our self-dependent risks have grown strong and great. Our scheme of government is simply the die struck from the matrix of our life. We are governed chiefly by the law that has come to be *within us*, and the external law we limit to the minimum of what will conserve the rights of the whole and save clash. It is a scheme that requires for its successful working considerable patience, some understanding of what it means to be a "good loser," and large sympathy for the other fellow's point of view; a reasonable sense of humor, too, will not be found amiss.

This is our system, and we shall not abandon it very soon; certainly not until our blood of enterprise has cooled through many generations, and we have lost the freshness of our hope and most of our resilience. Without, however, impairing the essential validity of our system, we may and doubtless shall, as opportunity offers or need compels, lend the form of the state to functions that have already ripened into public control or possession through natural absorption into purely public use and service. This is not Socialism, any more than it would be Socialism for a postoffice to handle packages in addition to letters.

From all we know of the experience of mankind it is not worth while for people, even if it were possible, that wealth should be equally distributed. It is worth while, however, that the creation of wealth among a people should have its effect in raising the general standard of comfort as a basis upon which all may have the opportunity of rising

into better enjoyment of the sunlight and fulfillment of the possibilities of life. We ought to rejoice and not begrudge if the laborer out of the product of industry can receive larger return as a result of the economies due to the wider scale of corporate enterprises; likewise, if as his share in the savings occasioned by the invention of machinery, his toil can be limited to one-third of the hours he has to live in his day. This means larger living for all the sons of men, and it means a better world to live in for us all.

The emergence of the large corporation into the broader day of public notice and its inevitable subordination to public responsibility are contributing directly to the betterment of the condition of those who are employed. Continuity of employment, improved rates of remuneration, care for the sick, provision of clubs and reading rooms, liberation from arbitrary treatment, pensioning after long service, are all features of a progressive betterment that has its source in a conscious responsibility to the tribunal of publicity, reinforced by an intelligent recognition that these things pay, that they are right, that with the resources available to great combinations they can be done.

It is worth while for a community to add distributed intelligence to distributed comfort. As yet the resources of the state are insufficient to do one-fifth of what ought to be done for education and I am confident will be done by the American state a century hence. The equipment of schools, universities and libraries is rapidly improving, but everywhere lags far behind the demand. The teaching profession is the poorest remunerated by far of all the professions, and though we theoretically preach that education chiefly comes by the inspiration of personality we practically content ourselves with teachers who are such either because they have resisted the blandishments of gain or because they lack the virility and initiative to push into business or the more riskful professions. Teaching ought to have the best, but when we are employing high school principals for twelve to fourteen hundred dollars a year we plainly deceive ourselves if we think we are getting the best. We are employing women inordinately as teachers, and are doing thereby an inexcusable and irreparable wrong to our boys, who after the age of twelve ought to be chiefly under the tutelage of men, and we are doing it either because we are not honest to what we know or are penurious in a matter of highest importance to the well-being of the community. Here is a place where private wealth devoting itself to public service can come to the aid of the temporarily embarrassed state. Why has no

one of our men of wealth seen his opportunity in building and equipping school-houses, or providing funds for teachers' salaries or pensions? Men are beginning to give to the universities, and in the coming decades will give in far richer measure. But why not give to the schools? Is it because they are owned by the state, and the state should care for its own? What better guarantee of perpetual use for the public good can be afforded than the plain open trusteeship of the public itself? Is any money more economically and honestly expended in our midst than school money? This alone is sufficient answer to the fear of politics. When interest is once awake, politics is simply public action,—it is the public. It is seedy only when interest is slack or understanding is confused by complication and obscurement of issues. There is nothing the American public will rebuke more soundly than the intrusion of graft and false political motives into the affairs of the schools. The way to cleanse politics is to give politics something serious to do and something the people are seriously interested in. People are seriously interested in the schools and they always will be. They come too near home for anything else. If we entrust our children to the schools, rich men can afford to trust their money to them.

The diffusion of healthful knowledge is one of the chief safeguards of our institutions,—not to the end that one may read his ballot, or the constitution, or the morning paper, but that he may be saved from being fooled so often, and from being a slave all the time. The worst slavery is fashioned in the joint bondage of ignorance, superstition, prejudice, and the rule of thumb. All these are creatures of isolation and the partial vision. Reading is a peculiar device,—peculiar in that it happens to combine in its effect two forms of liberation from the partial and the local. First: it allows one to commune with others who share the world with him at a given time but are removed in space. Second: it allows one to hold communion with men removed in time. The voice of man reaches for but a few yards of space and dies upon the winds in a moment of time. But the speech of man hardened into record triumphs over space to melt the various prejudices of place into the larger humanity of the larger society of man, and triumphs over time to show us the genealogy of superstition and prejudice and teach us how little we have had to do in framing even our own prejudices.

The reading of good books is surely a help toward the larger life. But how about promiscuous reading of

books just as they come, say in a public library, and of magazines just as they come in the news stalls? I am inclined to think even this better than what it displaces. Some grieve at the large proportion of fiction disbursed by the libraries; perhaps it is excessive, but we must know that very many people absorb their idealism only in this form. We have to have rest from facts, the prosaic work-a-day facts of our own uninteresting lives; we must dream dreams; we must live some other one's life, and take a vacation outside our own skins. This is a deep and universal human craving. It existed long before books and libraries. The legend, the folk-tale, the myth, the bard, the drama, the celebration of the mystery and the Dionysiac orgy all represent devices framed to satisfy this craving. The human animal insists upon living other lives, upon cantilevering out into space with constructions of the imagination. In fact imagination is the soul's assertion of its right to create, of its right to rule nature and shape and interpret it; it seems to be the seat of all progress in arts, the sciences and morals. It is that whereby man has come to rule his world; it is that whereby he has prepared himself a heaven.

The public library is safely and surely a blessing to the community. It drives out the dram-shops faster than New Year's resolutions. It is the friend of good manners, clean homes, and sweet reasonableness. As a foe of ignorance it helps to make freemen. Andrew Carnegie has chosen well. He has applied his benefactions at a point where perhaps more certainly than from any other he could have chosen they reach directly to the substantial betterment of human life and the fulfillment of democracy.

The genius of Jefferson's conception of democracy lay in the idea of distributed government—though he never, I believe, used the phrase,—and for the fair realization of such government is essential not only a reasonable degree of distributed well-being and of distributed intelligence, but above all of distributed responsibility. Every citizen must know that he is a participating member of the state, not only for the receiving of benefits, but for the rendering of service. We cannot make this system of free government work without large supplies of devotion, disinterestedness, patriotism. When we get to a point where nobody is doing anything for the state except as he is paid for it or expects to get something out of it, either emolument or office, honor or graft, then we are pretty near the end—at least near the end of the institutions our fathers established. We want more men at the primaries and on political committees who

are certain with their own consciences that they want no office,—who have no axe to grind for themselves or any interest. A man who has his eye set on an office, no matter if it be through a telescope, is likely to be of impaired usefulness for the public service. And yet I wish men of first-rate talent and integrity were more willing to accept public office. As it is now the state, which ought to command the absolutely best, is often getting only third-rate service,—in some cases third below zero. The large corporations, concerning which we entertain so manifold solicitudes, usually command immeasurably better administrative and legal talent than does the state. In a suit between a corporation and the state the corporation is likely to be represented by an attorney earning fifty to one hundred thousand dollars a year, while the public has secured itself the faltering services of some youngster who sought the office because he could not earn a living otherwise. Our towns do not send their ablest business men to the legislature. I hear it frequently said in excuse that such men will not give the time from their business. That is not the reason. They will not subject themselves to the pledges that are demanded for the nomination, to the intrigues that are necessary for the election, to the criticism and thanklessness of the public or the hounding of the interests when they do their independent duty. The remedy lies with you and me in the exercise of our plain civic duty. We need more public-mindedness in the rank and file. We have been indifferent. We have been willing, if we only were let alone, to let things go, to leave them to those who have axes to grind, and the result has been that the axe-grinders have elevated the boss and the machine into a formal trusteeship or agency which handles the offices on a percentage of money or favor. This would not be intolerable if the agency merely furnished us public servants as an Intelligence Office furnishes household servants. The Intelligence Office does not follow the servant over into our kitchens and dictate recipes for puddings, but it is a weird feature of modern American politics that when a man has been elected to a public office, he begins first to inquire what obligations he is under to the powers that nominated him, and to ask what they want him to do. This is reckoned in the politicians' code as the necessary comity and ethics of the situation. The *people* that elected him come in for later consideration, if at all. This is not the fault of the candidate; it is our own fault. In the eager pursuit of our private aims we have neglected our individual public responsibilities, and the reproof is automatic. The stream of public obliga-

tion in the spirit of our government will not rise higher than its source in the sense of public responsibility distributed throughout the masses of our citizenship.

We are engaged today in transferring a body of private substance rescued from the temporality of human, mortal hands, and dedicating it to the sacred perpetuity of public use, but the large value of the day will have been lost unless we here and now shall dedicate *ourselves* with new vows to civic duty and public zeal. For we are not our own.

Mr. Shepard said in conclusion:

I have now to make the formal announcement that this building will be open, after tonight, on the accustomed days and during the usual hours. It is your municipal book home; resort to it, use it; and, in the words of one of the best books ever written, "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" its contents—or such of them as are *worth while*; for a wise choice is the part of a good reader.

These dedicatory exercises will now be concluded by a prayer to be offered by the Right Rev. Frederick W. Keator, Bishop of the Episcopal District of Olympia:

Bishop Keator: Let us pray.

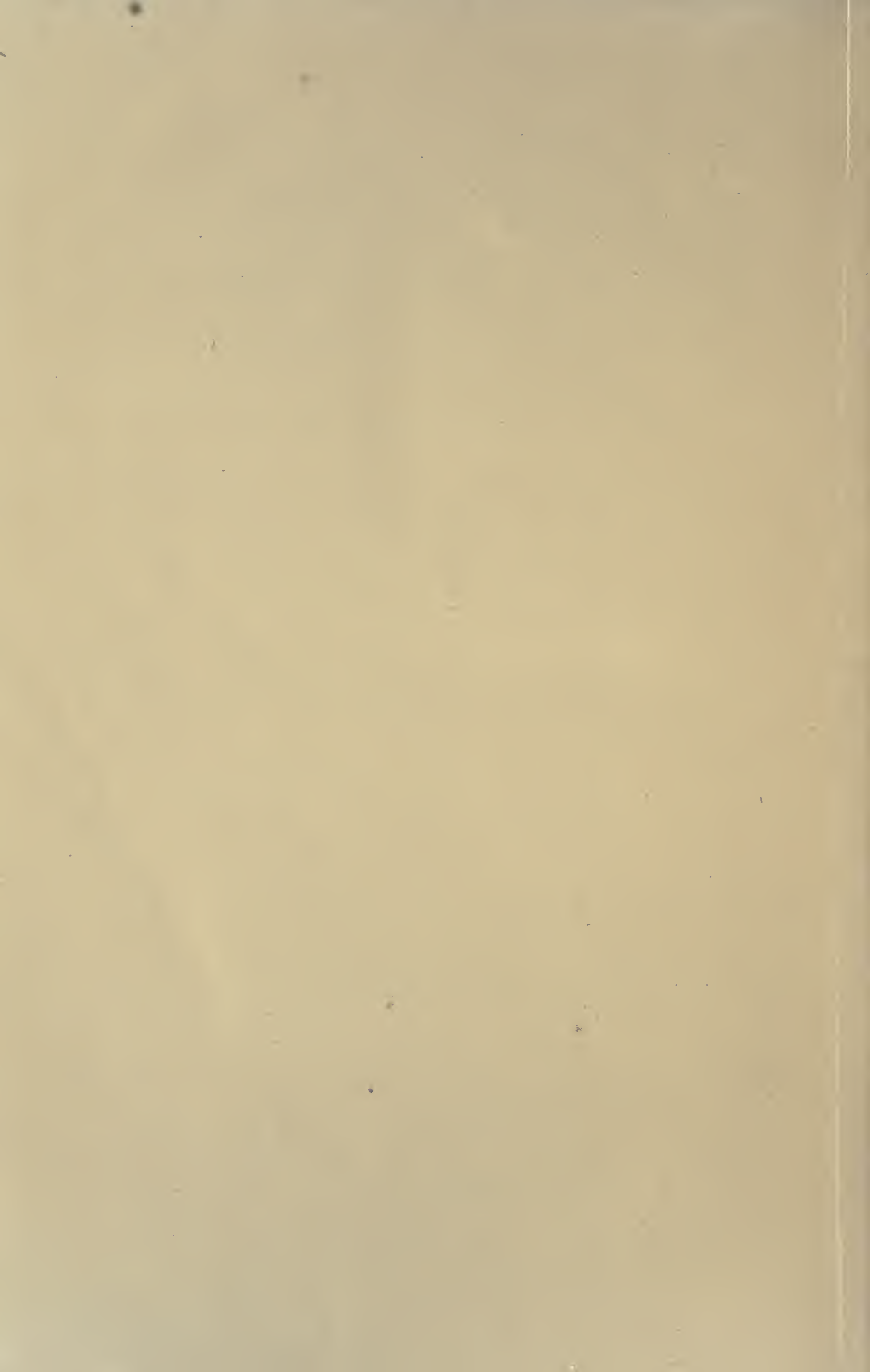
Almighty God; fountain of all wisdom and truth, source of all power and might, giver of every good gift; we laud and magnify Thy glorious name; we give Thee humble and hearty thanks for all the blessings we enjoy; all our progress, both material and spiritual, we do ascribe unto Thee who art ever opening before men the treasure of truth. Especially at this time we thank Thee for the blessings of education, of learning, and of culture, and for all the means for their increase among us—our churches, our schools and institutions of learning, our libraries and means of every sort.

Now, our God, we do invoke Thy blessing upon us who are met together to celebrate the opening of this public library. Thou hast put it into the minds and the hearts of men to give of their means and of their labors for its upbuilding in this community. We pray Thee that Thy favor may continue to abide with it, and as Thou hast given the mind to build it, give also the will to use it, that it may become a power for good in our civic and individual life and for our growth in the knowledge of Thy truth.

We ask it all in the name of Him who has taught us to pray:

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen."







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